



Implementation of a hospital-initiated home medicine review referral pathway in a rural Western Australian hospital.

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Background

In 2022 WA Country Health Service (WACHS) received grant funding for a Hospital Avoidance Program (HAP) with the aim to reduce potentially preventable hospitalisations for the elderly and those with chronic conditions by diverting them to alternative care pathways.

This would also help to improve ongoing Emergency Department (ED) overcrowding and access block issues and improve care for a vulnerable subset of the population.

A temporary clinical pharmacist position was created within the Bunbury HAP team to capture patients that were discharged directly home from the Bunbury Hospital ED at risk of medication misadventure and link them to community services – primarily Home Medicine Reviews (HMR's).

Objective

Establishment of a successful pharmacist-led hospital-initiated post-discharge home medicine review referral pathway at a rural Western Australian hospital that supports patients to access a home medicine review (HMR) following discharge from ED.

Action

Review of existing pharmaceutical service delivery models and pathways:

- Relevant journal articles on HMR's and hospital-initiated pathways were reviewed particularly focusing on barriers/enablers to implementation.
- HMR rules and frameworks were reviewed to ensure the developed model is compliant with current legislation.
- Existing Australian hospital pathways/models were explored. Contact was made with over 30 hospitals major hospitals across Australia to see what hospital initiated HMR referral services have successfully been implemented. This would avoid reinventing the wheel.

Ensure local stakeholder engagement and consultation

Accredited pharmacists (Bunbury region)

- ✓ All accredited pharmacists practicing in Bunbury region were contacted (8 total)
- ✓ Confirmed capacity to perform anticipated HMR increase
- ✓ Confirmed support for hospital-initiated pathway

GP Practice Managers and GP's (Bunbury region)

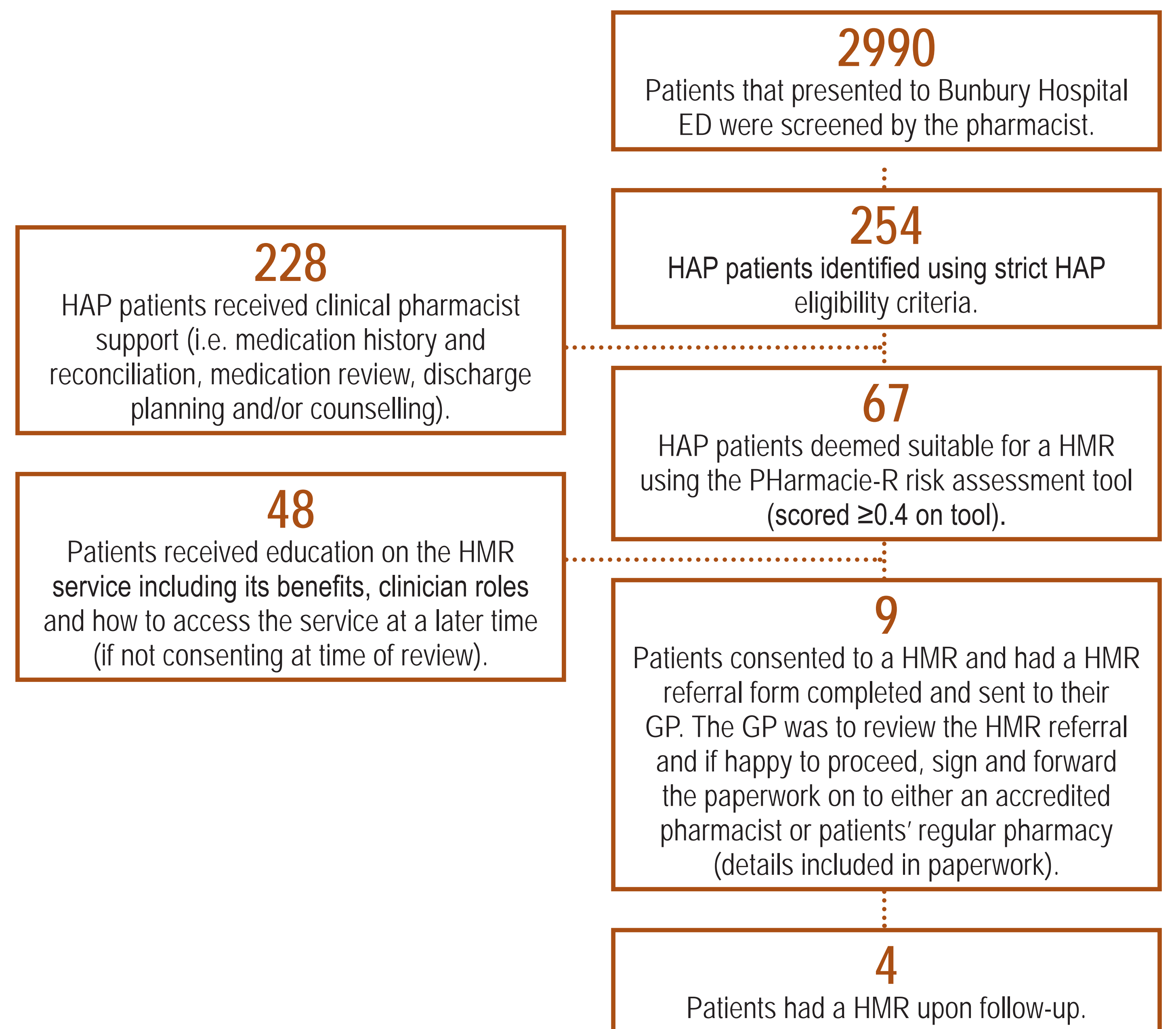
- ✓ All GP practices in Bunbury contacted and alerted to the new hospital initiated HMR referral pathway
- Minimal feedback received on HMR referral pathway documents
- ✓ Most supported idea of hospital initiated HMR pathway and preferred the pharmacist to draft the HMR referral for them. This feedback shaped the forms developed from a recommendation form to a HMR referral form.

The HMR referral model and associated documentation was approved for use from January 2023 and trialled for 6 months until June 2023.

Forms produced

The figure shows two forms side-by-side. The left form is titled 'WACHS - SW HOME MEDICINES REFERRAL' and contains fields for patient details, a referral form, and a consent form. The right form is titled 'WACHS - SW HOME MEDICINES REVIEW PATIENT CONSENT FORM' and contains fields for patient details, a consent form, and a signature line. Both forms include a barcode and a QR code.

Figure 1: HMR Referral Form and Patient Consent form produced for clinicians and patients to support the HMR referral pathway.



Reasons for HMR referral non-completion included



Reasons for HMR non-completion included



Discussion

The referral pathway developed provides an avenue for high-risk patients to access a HMR post-discharge from ED.

The low referral rate observed overall can be attributed to:

- The strict HAP eligibility criteria
- A large proportion of suitable HMR candidates later being admitted to hospital or transferred to a different hospital

Expansion of the model to include patients that are admitted to hospital may increase the number of HMR referrals and awareness of the HMR service.

Outcomes

Relevant HMR pathway forms have been approved, standardised and published for local use.

Approval for expansion of the referral process beyond the HAP cohort has occurred via the local medication governance committee.

- Allows all high-risk patients that present to all WACHS South West hospital sites the opportunity for a HMR referral/recommendation.

A new form has also been developed that enables a range of WACHS staff (non-pharmacists) including nursing, allied health and chronic condition coordinators to alert a patients' GP if they are concerned of medication misadventure upon discharge.

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 - Accredited pharmacists and General Practitioners in the Bunbury Region of WA

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